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FOCUS

THE MEDIA

Reaching out:
A challenge of Education for All

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Schools buried under heavy mudflows. Families cramped in evacuation centres. Children in tent schools without any teaching aids. These are typical images in the Philippine's Central Luzon provinces, heavily damaged by what is now considered the world's most devastating volcanic eruption this century. The calamity not only altered the physical features of the region; it also posed a challenge to educators as the traditional classroom setting was no longer adequate.

OPINION

In too many parts of the world, natural or man-made disasters have put a heavy burden on education systems. The Cold War has come to an end, but armed conflicts abound, resulting in dislocation, misery and death: "ethnic cleansing" in former Yugoslavia, civil strife in hunger-stricken Somalia, and the unending drama in the Middle East, to name a few.

Indeed, a unique opportunity is provided for countries to design alternative learning systems to respond to a world in tumultuous change. In 1990, the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) underscored the need for alternative learning systems and called for each country to devise effective and innovative ways of meeting basic learning needs. Alternative learning enables children and adults to learn outside the classroom, through non-conventional delivery systems such as radio or self-learning study packs, often employing participatory or experimental methodologies.

After the World Conference, many countries responded to the challenge and launched EFA action plans. For example, the vision of the ten-year Philippine Plan is an educational order that "shall be pursued along the concept of holistic learning systems where education is equated with lifelong learning with the world as classroom."

Rhetorical statements are easily put down on paper. Getting down to implementing the plan requires more – a strong political will and adequately trained and committed development planners and teachers who are willing to undergo a drastic reorientation of their attitudes and work styles. It demands the support of the entire learning system, including students and parents. It also demands creativity and imagination.

In many parts of the world where learners are dispersed in evacuation centres or refugee camps, learning can be brought to them through mobile teachers and vans, self-learning modules, radio and other modes of distance education.

These provisional "learning environments" provide an opportunity for parents, elders and other members of the community to "rediscover" their responsibility to be actively involved in teaching children while they themselves can be participants in non-formal classes.

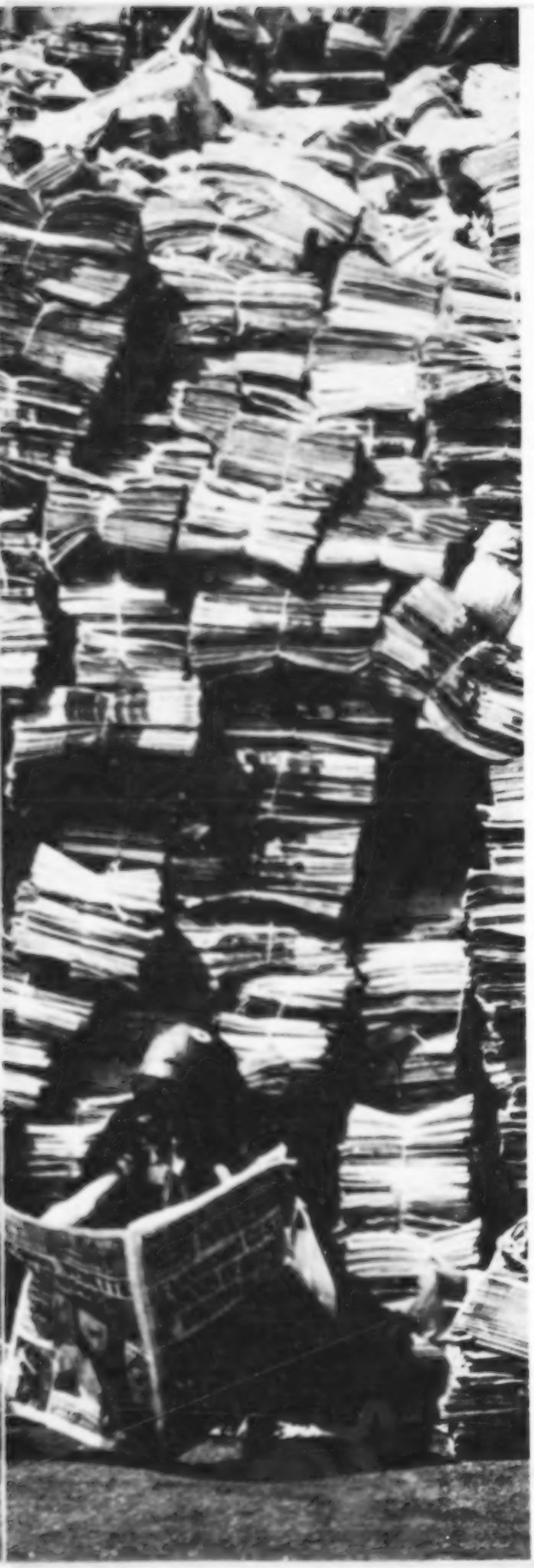
In addition to learning basic skills essential to their survival, these uprooted populations also need constructive social interaction to help them bear their emotional burdens and look to their future with hope.

If alternative learning strategies can succeed in transforming evacuation centres and refugee camps of despair to centres of knowledge, skills and hope, a positive signal will go to educational planners to start renewing entire education systems.

Florangel Rosario-Braid

Chairperson, Philippine Education for All Social Mobilization and Advocacy Committee, and vice-chairperson, Communication Committee of the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines. She is also president and dean of the Asian Institute of Journalism.

Photo: R. Caruso



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The Media Challenge of Education for All

THREE YEARS AGO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY LAUNCHED A HISTORIC GLOBAL CAMPAIGN TO PROVIDE BASIC EDUCATION FOR ALL CHILDREN AND ADULTS BEFORE THE YEAR 2000. ONE MAJOR CHALLENGE IS HOW TO MOBILIZE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION CHANNELS TO MEET BASIC LEARNING NEEDS, PARTICULARLY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

At present there is no specialized mechanism for spearheading action at the international level to develop, test and disseminate effective applications of instructional and communications technologies appropriate for the Education for All goals.

Third channel

In addition to formal (official, school-based), and non-formal (less official but structured) education, there are a variety of informal learning opportunities that are offered in many settings and through a variety of media. Often referred to collectively as "Third Channel" education, this includes the traditional and modern mass media such as radio, television, folk drama, newspapers and advertising, as well as computer networks.

According to a UNICEF document: "The Third Channel encompasses a wide range of intersecting national and local channels, limited only by the imagination, will and capacity to make them work. Through the Third Channel, all sectors of society and all channels of communication can be mobilized in pursuit of meeting the basic learning needs of all."

The potential impact of the Third Channel in education has increased dramatically in recent decades with the convergence of two major forces: the tremendous

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growth of information and knowledge essential to survival and well-being, and the expanison of the world's technical capacity and outreach through new communication technologies.

An evaluation of public health campaigns conducted by Johns Hopkins University, United States, reveals that the mass media are more effective in producing behavioural change than had been previously thought. Health and family planning information, disseminated through radio, television and print materials, increased visits to clinics, calls to hotlines and the overall demand for contraceptives, sometimes by over 100 percent.

Encountering problems

Despite the increase in the use of communication technologies for basic education, they are not fully exploited for educational purposes. For example, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) recently estimated that at present only 5 percent of broadcasting hours in developing countries are devoted to education; the rest are for entertainment and propaganda.

All available instruments and channels of information, communications and social action could be used to help convey essential knowledge and inform and educate people on social issues. In addition to traditional means, libraries, television, radio and other media can be mobilized to realize their potential towards meeting basic learning needs of all.

World Declaration on Education for All, Jomtien, Thailand, 1990.

But even if a country broadcasts educational programmes, it may encounter other problems. In one country the national broadcasting corporation had the capacity to reach 85 percent of its population, but a survey revealed only a 15 percent listenership. Whether this was due to public disinterest in the programmes or to technical difficulties is difficult to say.

Photo: UNESCO/D.Cros

Despite the explosive increase in communication technologies, countries are not yet fully exploiting them for educational purposes.

New partnerships between national and international leaders and organizations are required to ensure that resource poor countries have access to modern technologies. A recent report challenges the view that information technology is a luxury that African countries cannot afford. On the contrary, the report argues that African countries cannot afford to pass up the opportunities that this technology presents.

Boosting learning achievement

There are are number of successful Third Channel experiences in developing countries. For example, Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) has proven efficient in boosting achievement of primary school children in core subjects such as mathematics, language, science and health. Over 600,000 children in Africa, Asia and Latin America are benefiting from this low-cost intervention in the learning process. In Kenya, the Radio Language Arts project showed that by using radio in teaching English as a second language, children showed significantly improved achievement compared to pupils in conventional classrooms. Radio lessons covered three times as much content in a half hour as traditional lessons and introduced the children to a wonderful world of creation and invention.

In the United States, (and many other countries) the pre-school TV programme *Sesame Street* is highly successful in teaching children basic knowledge and preparing them for school.

New possibilities

Another example is *Facts for Life*, a joint initiative of UNICEF, WHO, UNESCO, and other leading international organizations. The booklet, presented as a "communications challenge", contains vital information on subjects such as the timing of births, safe motherhood, breastfeeding, AIDS, immunization and child health in simple language that can be understood by all. Now used by fifty-five countries and translated into eighty languages, it has has been commended by communicators because it is clearly presented, informative and adaptable to different socio-cultural situations.

As the World Declaration on Education for All states: "New possibilities exist today which result from the convergence of the increase in information and the unprecedented capacity to communicate. We must seize them with creativity and a determination for increased effectiveness".

Radio boosts educational quality in Africa

Angola, Cap Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and São Tomé e Príncipe have a problem in common: their children do not learn enough during the four first years in school. Much of this problem is due to poor teaching in two subjects: Arithmetic and Portuguese, a second language for most pupils.

With the help of UNESCO, the five countries, referred to as the PALOP (African countries with Portuguese as an official language), decided to find a solution to their common problem. They suggested that mass media be used to complement classroom teaching. Radio was chosen as the medium because it reaches most of the schools, and can easily be upgraded to reach all.

The IRI/PALOP Project (Interactive Radio Instruction in the PALOP Countries) aims at producing radio programmes in Arithmetic and Portuguese for the first four grades of primary education. In addition, it aims at developing national capacities to produce such programmes.

Says Jan Visser, sub-regional education adviser in UNESCO's Southern Africa Office in Harare, Zimbabwe: "The project uses radio in an innovative, interactive way. Students respond to the radio, verbally or by doing things every ten to fifteen seconds. The programmes are based on the principle that learning small portions of content is more effective than concentrating on large chunks of subject matter. Every few minutes the topic changes to keep the learners' attention."

"Not only kids enjoy these programmes," he adds. "Teachers usually learn from them as well, and by using the programmes, their own teaching style becomes more active."

UNESCO's Harare Office, in collaboration with USAID-funded LearnTech Project, plays a leading role in developing the project.

Cap Verde

Learning through video in Nigeria

How can small children in Africa's remote rural areas be prepared for schooling? The World Bank thinks that video and television broadcasts might be able to help. Recognizing the importance of mass media for basic education, the Bank will launch a US$8 million pilot project in Nigeria, aiming to reach 10,000 pre-schoolers as well as their their parents through educational video programmes. Mobile vans equipped with videos will bring nationally produced programmes on early childhood development to rural areas, while television broadcasts will reach larger, urban centres. The programmes include "Sesame Street" type broadcasts for children as well as programmes targeted for parents.

"We hope that this project will give young children a head start for later schooling," says Adriaan Verspoor of the World Bank's Education and Social Policy Department. "But educating kids is not enough. It is just as important to bring home the message of educational development, nutrition and health to parents and the larger community in which they live." The content of the 130 planned episodes, each running 20-25 minutes, will be developed in close collaboration between educators, ministry officials, broadcasters and producers from various regions of the country. The project should start this year and run until 1998.

Another on-going World Bank assisted media project in Ghana promotes the use of radio and newspapers to help build a literate society. Designed to bring to scale a successful but small governmental pilot programme, the US$17.5 million project, which started this year and will run for three years, uses popular modes such as jingles and soap operas to promote literacy as well as health, nutrition and food production. In addition, the project will fund two newspapers to be produced in local languages and used as post-literacy material. "Both the Nigerian and Ghana projects stress monitoring and evaluation," says Verspoor. "It is critical in order to find our what works well and what doesn't". ■

IMAGE - An action group for multi-channel learning

Some thirty professionals involved in communications and education met at UNESCO headquarters on 19 and 20 October 1992 to work out an action programme to promote traditional and modern media to strengthen and extend education delivery systems.

The meeting agreed to set up an International Multi-Channel Action Group for Education (IMAGE), an umbrella group of organizations and professionals sharing resources and working together for common goals.

"Multi-channel learning is an intersectoral approach to education, utilizing all available communications channels in the culture," according to an IMAGE document. Participants from UNESCO, UNICEF and ILO, as well as several national and international non-governmental organizations, agreed to set up a steering committee. The IMAGE secretariat will be based at the International Council for Distance Education, in Oslo, Norway.

IMAGE's main objectives are those of the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien 1990): universalizing access and promoting equity, focusing on learning, broadening the means and scope of basic education, enhancing the learning environment and strengthening partnerships. But IMAGE will concentrate on promoting the use of distance education and other multi-channel approaches.

The meeting adopted a three-year programme of action, estimated at some US$1 million. It aims to strengthen primary education, provide vulnerable groups with education and training for survival, and develop human resources through multi-channel learning.

For more information, please contact:
Mr. Reidar Roll, Secretary General, International Council for Distance Education, Gjerdrums vei 12, 0482, Oslo, Norway
Tel: 472 950630,
Fax: 472 950 719

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BRIEFS

●● EFA in Venezuela

UNESCO, the ELF Foundation (endowed by the French petroleum group with the same name) and the Venezuelan Government have signed a $414,700 agreement to establish two Education for All centres in disadvantaged areas of Venezuela. The agreement, signed on 9 November, 1992, will benefit some 2,000 people in rural zones of the states of Guarico and Monagas. ELF will provide the financing while UNESCO will oversee execution of the project. The two centres will include classes for primary education, manual workshops, preventive education, sports facilities, a creche, kitchen, sanitary facilities and a vegetable garden.

Photo: UNICEF/J.Schytte

●● Rapid survey to assess learning in Bangladesh

The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) in collaboration with UNICEF has initiated a rapid survey technique to measure basic learning achievement among 10-11 year old children. The survey measures achievement in literacy, numeracy and life-skills, and provides a bench-mark against which progress towards Education for All goals can be assessed. Preliminary results show that only 29 percent of Bangladeshi children have achieved an acceptable basic education level according to the definition and criteria set. In the survey, boys generally scored better than girls, especially in urban areas, and urban children as a group did better than rural children.

●● United States: Symposiums promote basic education

Starting in January 1993, the United States Coalition on Education for All (USCEFA) will sponsor a series of symposiums on innovations in education.

The symposiums will bring together domestic and international experts from the public, private and voluntary sector to exchange information and examine issues and experiments in education.

Topics will include integration of social services in the school, the role of media in education, the educational implications of the North American Free Trade Agreement and the debate on national curriculum. In all cases, domestic and international perspectives will be addressed.

USCEFA is a non-governmental organization promoting EFA awareness and action in the United States.

For more information, please contact: The United States Coalition on Education for All, 1616 N. Fort Myer Drive, Suite 1100, Arlington, Virginia, USA 22209.
Fax: 703 528 7480

●● Education "the most important element" to reach United Nations goals

James P. Grant, executive director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), has singled out education as *the* most critical element that will lead to and sustain the achievement of all other goals set out in the declaration of the World Summit for Children, as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN system-wide goals and strategies for the 1990s.

Addressing a recent UNICEF meeting in New York, Grant emphasized that if the world community wants to deal effectively with population growth, environmental degradation, child mortality and street children, basic education is essential, especially for girls.

He stressed the importance of advocacy for increased official development assistance for basic education, but cautioned that money is not enough. Political will, parental willingness to send children to school and keep them there, co-operation between communities, NGOs and donors, and the mobilization of whole societies for education are absolutely necessary.

●● Enrolling schools in the fight against AIDS

As there is no cure for AIDS, nor any vaccine for the HIV infection, education is crucial for limiting the spread of the disease. The potential of health education in the prevention of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases is examined in a new issue of the World Health Organization's AIDS series, published jointly by WHO and UNESCO.

The 79-page guide, *School health education to prevent AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases*, describes how school health education programmes on AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases can be developed and integrated into existing curricula. It considers a number of issues that will need to be addressed by education authorities, such as how to enlist the support of parents, special training of teachers, and ways of creating an appropriate classroom environment for discussion of sensitive subjects.

The guide concludes that the best way to educate about sexually transmitted diseases is to create a broad health education programme that covers a wide variety of topics: community health, human relationships, sexuality, drug use etc. Taking into account the local culture and educational norms is an imperative, the guide stresses.

●● Ten Pacific Island countries committed to EFA

Ten Pacific Island countries have committed themselves to rejuvenate their education systems in order to combat in-school illiteracy and low reading abilities. Through a four-year UNESCO project, estimated at US$4 million, the countries aim at improving the quality of primary education and strengthening education management systems through strategies to raise teachers' classroom performance and curriculum innovations to enhance life skills. The countries are the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Niue, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Western Samoa.

In addition to UNESCO inputs, the project is receiving financial assistance from UNICEF, UNDP and the governments of Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom; funding is expected from the Danish International Deve-lopment Agency (DANIDA).

CAMBODIA:

UNESCO helps soldiers trade guns for books

Sen Vothy, 23, sits on a wooden bench in a military barracks with a dirt floor. The decrepit walls are riddled with bullet holes, and on one of the walls a huge red banner reads: "Never again the genocide!"

Vothy is one of twenty young men in green uniforms, holding sharpened pencils in their rough hands with their eyes fixed on their teacher, a woman of 23, who drills the group in the Khmer alphabet.

For the last three years, Vothy has been a soldier in the State of Cambodia army, one of the four armies in the country's wrenching civil war. A week ago, he was given a chance to a better life by attending a three-month course in basic literacy and numeracy. These classes form the final phase of a UNESCO project and are given in a *cantonment* (military centre where inactive soldiers are based) in the Kampong Cham province, some hundred kilometres from the capital Phnom Penh.

Starting in June last year, the project aims at providing the soldiers with the necessary skills to find jobs, integrate more easily into the emerging market economy and participate in free and fair elections. In close partnership with the International Catholic Migration Commission, a Geneva-based non-governmental organization, UNESCO has already trained some 300 soldiers as literacy instructors. They will in turn teach some 6,000 illiterate soldiers and other vulnerable groups, such as disabled, women, children, internally displaced persons etc.

"If the war ends, I hope to become a farmer," says Vothy, a rather shy and reserved young man who speaks through an interpreter. "Being able to read and write will help me."

After more than twenty years of conflict which has seen deaths generally estimated at over one million and the flight of hundreds of thousands of others, a fragile peace is settling in Cambodia. Shortly after a peace agreement was signed between the four warring factions in Paris in October 1991, the United Nations launched its biggest peace keeping operation ever, sending 22,000 troops and civilians under the umbrella of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).

Although there is no recent survey of the current literacy rate, UNESCO estimates that of the soldiers who live in a *cantonment*, 70 percent are functionally illiterate.

UNESCO was the first Agency to organize training for demobilized soldiers. The project's budget of US$382,000 is financed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees(UNHCR), UNTAC, the United Nations Development Programme(UNDP), the International Labour Organization(ILO), and UNESCO. In its first phase, fifteen educated Cambodians with previous teaching experience were trained to become literacy trainers. 9,000 booklets for post-literacy work as well as easy-to-read materials were produced.

In phase two, each trainer was sent to *cantonments* across the war-torn country and in turn taught twenty inactive soldiers with some literacy skills to become literacy instructors. In phase three, which is now underway, the newly trained teachers either go into villages to teach civilians, or stay in *cantonments* to instruct illiterate fellow soldiers. For this they receive a monthly salary of $75.

So far, only soldiers from three of the four armies are taking part, because one faction has refused to lay down its arms as agreed by the Paris peace accord. With a a recent upsurge in fighting and harassment of peacekeepers, UNESCO and all the participants in this "swords into ploughshares programme" can only hope that Cambodia in its crucial run-up to elections will achieve the necessary pre-conditions for a lasting peace. ■

New project to monitor basic learning

UNESCO and UNICEF have started a three-year joint project aimed at helping governments strengthen their capacities to continuously monitor learning achievement in primary schools.

The "Monitoring Project," which focuses on primary education as the cutting edge of any Education for All strategy, will develop a set of measurable and internationally accepted indicators that can be used to monitor progress in basic learning and detect critical shortcomings.

The project director, Vinayagum Chinapah, of UNESCO's Unit for Inter-Agency Co-operation in Basic Education, said the project will work out an appropriate methodology and a battery of monitoring instruments that can be readily applied and adapted to varying contexts. These include a core of basic education indicators, a sample frame for school surveys, a model questionnaire and a simple test for pupil achievement in basic literacy and life skills.

Project identification missions have been undertaken in China, Jordan, Mali, Morocco, and Mauritius. Other countries are expected to join the project in 1993.

BOOK NOTES

Education for All: What are we waiting for?

Imagine a world in which every child would be able to go to school. Today, 130 million children do not have this opportunity. The world's failure to educate all children not only deprives the girls and boys who don't go to school, it undermines economic security, political and social justice, and even public health worldwide. What can be done?

In *Education for All: What are we waiting for?*, Mary B. Anderson explores how we can meet the education challenge. It sets out where we are today and why. It examines the failures of conventional school systems and tells stories of innovative programmes in Bangladesh, Colombia, Kenya, the Dominican Republic, Zimbabwe and Lebanon. It also identifies lessons we have learnt about how to educate children in order to meet today's education challenge.

Education for All: What are We Waiting for?, by Mary B. Anderson, published by UNICEF, New York, 1992, 111 p. ISBN: 92-806-2016-9

Human Development Report 1992

Restricted and unequal access to the world's financial, trade and labour markets costs developing nations and their poor populations US$500 billion annually, says the *Human Development Report 1992*, published for the United Nations Development Programme(UNDP). That is nearly ten times what those countries receive in foreign aid.

The report suggests a two-pronged strategy to get out of this dilemma. First, by making massive investments in people and strengthening technological capacity, some developing countries can acquire a strong competitive edge in international markets. Second, there should be basic international reforms, including restructuring the Bretton Woods institutions, setting up a Development Security Council within the United Nations and convening a World Summit on Human Development to consider a global compact between all nations and peoples.

The report is the third in an annual series, prepared by an independent team of distinguished economists under the guidance of Dr. Mabub ul Haq, former finance minister of Pakistan and now special adviser to the UNDP Administrator.

According to the report, the real causes of poverty and human deprivation are deeply rooted in the national policies of developing countries themselves. "Global environment should never be used as an alibi for domestic inaction nor can global reforms substitute for domestic reforms," says Dr. Haq.

Human Development Report 1992, published by Oxford University Press for the United Nations Development Programme, Oxford, 1992, 216 p. ISBN: 0-19-507773-3 (paper) ISBN: 0-19-507772-5

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

JANUARY-MARCH 1993

January 18-19 *The Hague*
Steering Committee Meeting of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All.
>>>>Mr. Michael Lakin, UNESCO, Secretariat for the EFA Forum, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07SP, France
Fax: (33)1 40 65 94 06

January 19-22 *Paris (France)*
International Workshop on Quality Improvement of Primary Education in Developing Countries
>>>>UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)
Mr. Gabriel Carron, 7-9 rue Eugène-Delacroix, 75116, Paris, France
Fax: 33.1. 40.72.83.66

January 26-28 *New York (U.S.A)*
International Coordinating Committee of the Education for All Network
>>>>NGO Standing Committee for UNESCO
1, Rue Miollis, S-1/34
75732 Paris CEDEX 15, France
Fax: 33.1.45.66.03.37

February 1-4 *Harbin (China)*
Regional Seminar on Policy, Planning, and Organization of Education for Children and Young People with Special Needs.
>>>>UNESCO, ED/BAS/PE, 7 Place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris, 07 SP, France.
Fax: 33.1.40.65.94.05

March 19-20 *Reading (United Kingdom)*
Sustaining Local Literacies: People, Language, Power
Education for Development with University of Reading Faculty of Education and Community Studies
>>>>Ms. Julia de Faveri, FECS, University of Reading, Bulmershe Court, Earley, Reading RG3 6LT, United Kingdom
Fax: 0734-352080

March 1-2 *Beijing (China)*
National Conference on EFA
>>>>National Commission of the People's Republic of China for UNESCO, 35, Damucanghutong, Xidan, Beijing 100816
Fax: 86.1.601.79.12

EFA 2000

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